

SAYS PARK SYSTEM HERE IS INEFFICIENT

Thomas Skornpa, Landscape Gardener, Declares Worst Form Prevails.

(Continued from First Page.)

park administration and real usefulness of parks," declares Mr. Skornpa. "I do not care to criticize any of the officials in charge, because they are anxious to make the best sort of record during their temporary tenure of office, and the big thing on the record of an official here seems to be his ability to conduct his office at as low a cost as possible. That is a very good system in the abstract, but when it comes to sacrificing material that has cost money to obtain, to permitting shrubbery plants and schemes for the utilization of plants and shrubbery to die away has grown or half finished—such economy is the worst form of extravagance.

Little Hope of Change.
"There can be little hope of a change of system with the utter lack of appreciation of the parks that is shown by the people themselves. I do not mean this in criticism of the attitude of the average citizen—he seems to have some interest. But the men who really control things in the District are not the average citizens. In Europe they take some pride in the beautification of the cities. In Europe they do their best, under the most absolute forms of municipal control, to build up the parks as pleasure grounds, playgrounds, for the people.

"In this country the matter of making the parks real rest spots, where the people can find relief from the four bare walls of their homes and where there are devices to give them pleasure and amusement as well as beautiful things to rest the eye and stimulate the soul, has been taken up with great enthusiasm.
"In most cities of this country—and I am familiar with many—the work that has been done is constructive and lasting. The people have seen to it that the men elected by them and placed in charge of the parks were the most expert obtainable and that they administered their offices in a way that made for better parks. They have insisted on economy, too, but constructive economy—not the cheese-paring economy of Washington.

Selfishness is Charged.
"Here the citizens have no control whatever over their affairs. Here the only men who seem to take any interest in beautifying or embellishing the city are those who own large tracts of property they wish to sell or houses they wish to rent and they are only interested in improving that part of the city in which their own real estate holdings are located—excluding every other part.
"There isn't a real public park in Washington as other cities have public parks, and there isn't a city in the United States where the opportunity for

economically developing a real park system is so great.
"I came here to work September 15. I found that during the summer eighty men were used in the maintenance of the parks. When fall came, this number was reduced to ten. Eighty men were hardly enough to look after the parks in the summer. Eighty men make it almost physically impossible to keep up any sort of a system of improvement or embellishment or to continue what had been started. Ten men are not enough to care for the material that is on hand and certainly not enough to develop any sort of scheme.
"There you have the extravagance of economy. The trees, shrubbery, lawns cannot be maintained with such a force. It is waste. Everything that is done must be approved by those in supreme charge. These men are engineers mostly, and they are engineers who are only concerned with the park system for a short time. They naturally desire to run their offices as economically as possible. It is impossible for them to have an accurate knowledge of actual conditions and it is equally impossible for them to have any real personal interest in the work outside of that desire to administer it as cheaply as possible.

Opportunity Is Unlimited.
"The force under them is largely made up of untrained men—untrained in the real science of horticulture and landscape gardening. The superintendent of parks under the superintendent of public buildings and grounds is a hardworking, conscientious man who entered the service as a boy and worked his way to his present position by hard work. He deserves great credit for what he has done. But he is not a horticulturist or a landscape gardener, nor has he had any experience in the administration of public parks as they are administered in other cities of this country or the cities of Europe. He is a product of the system that has kept down and will always keep down the development of the Washington parks.
"Nothing can be done here until this system is changed, until some control is given the parks that will develop an interest in them among the people at large and will stimulate demands on the powers that control appropriations for proper treatment of the parks not only in the matter of money itself, but in the matter of putting men in charge who will take a deep personal interest in their work beyond the mere saving of pennies, and will save dollars and human lives by making the parks the recreation centers of the people as well as the beauty spots of the city.
"This can be done, and I hope it will be done. You have the most unlimited opportunity here. I have heard men say you cannot make recreation centers of the parks and keep them beautiful; that you cannot grow fine lawns that are run over by the masses of the people. In Chicago we have more than a million people, laboring men and women living on the west side. We have the most beautiful lawns in Garfield and Humboldt and Douglas parks—as beautiful as there are in the world—and there isn't a keep off the grass sign in the whole city of Chicago."

Fire Losses in District During November \$38,310
Fire losses in the District during the month of November amounted to a total of \$38,310, covered by an insurance of \$325,310, according to the monthly report of Fire Chief Frank J. Wagner. During the month 149 alarms of fire were received, of which thirteen were false.

GARRISON FOR HEAVY MOBILE ARTILLERY

To Ask Congress for Money for Defending the Unprotected Places Along Coasts.

Secretary of War Garrison is preparing to ask Congress for money to build up a mobile heavy artillery as a means of defending unprotected places along the two coast lines.

Brigadier General Crozier, chief of ordnance, has been instructed to make experiments with gigantic guns capable of being mounted on railway cars or motor trucks, so that they may be transported from place to place and set up on temporary bases or fired if necessary from the motor car or train.

Mr. Garrison will ask that part of the \$20,000,000 annually asked for ordnance during a four-year period be set aside for this purpose.

Ordinance experts of the army have obtained a mass of data from military observers with the belittled armies as to the success achieved in firing big guns from railway platforms. It has been learned, for instance, that Germany has been able to fire 30-inch howitzers from railway flat cars, braced to withstand the recoil of the guns. Moreover, by use of trains and motor cars, the guns have been possible to rush guns from place to place to meet unexpected defense and carry out plans of attack.

Experiments have been made with a view to determining the practicability of transporting large sixteen-inch guns by rail and transferring them to temporary concrete foundations. Study has also been given to the type of gun that could be fired from trains, and the twelve-inch howitzer is favored by experts.

Construction of railroads paralleling the coast lines as a means of quickly transporting artillery to points threatened with attack is one of the features of the plan under consideration.

Mr. Garrison said that a plan of carrying out this program would not be fully formed until the ordnance experts complete their investigations now under way.

January 2 Fixed as Pan-American Sunday
In honor of the thousand-odd delegates to be in Washington attending the Pan-American Scientific Congress and other meetings held in conjunction with it, January 2 is to be known as Pan-American Sunday and the State Department has requested the ministers of all the churches of Washington to preach appropriate sermons on that day.

It is probable that some arrangement will be made for special services in one or two of the churches which will be attended by the delegates. The officers of the Pastors' Federation have asked that the ministers all take cognizance of the request of the State Department, and that every effort be made to preach sermons that will set forth the spirit of Pan-American Unionism.

OPPOSE FILLING OF KLINGL FORD VALLEY

Cleveland Park School and Community Association Voices Disapproval of Plan.

A vigorous protest against the filling in of Klingl Ford valley as part of a real estate improvement plan that is said to contemplate cutting down the hill at the main entrance to the Zoo and dumping it into the valley, is to be made by the Cleveland Park School and Community Association.

Members of the association voiced their disapproval of the plan at a meeting last night in the John Eaton School, Thirty-fourth and Macomb streets northwest. President Edgar D. Turner was instructed to appoint a committee to appear before the Commissioners at a public hearing in January to oppose any scheme that would destroy the beauty of the valley. It was pointed out that the valley was the main approach to the Zoo and Rock Creek Park from the west.

The association determined to settle by agreement, if possible, the question of "jurisdiction" in the northwest suburban territory. At present, four associations interlap to some extent, it is declared, and a committee composed of W. L. Peet, W. F. Woodard, W. W. Husband, Frank J. Hogan, and G. H. Powell was appointed to take up the matter with the Cathedral Heights and

Connecticut Avenue Associations and arrange a working agreement.
Resolutions were adopted calling upon the Public Utilities Commission to investigate the car service of the Washington Railway and Electric Company on the Georgetown and Tenleytown line.
Many members participated in a general discussion condemning the service and alleged untidy condition of the cars. The association will ask for a generally adequate service, including the restoration of the fifteen-minute

through schedule and express cars in the morning.
Thomas H. Kearney, of the Department of Agriculture, gave an illustrated lecture on the transplanting of the date growing industry from the Biblical countries and Africa to America. He said that although dates are selling in the Washington market for 10 cents a pound, California dates, raised from trees recently brought to this country from Africa, are selling as high as 75 cents a pound.

Socialists to Have Social And Supper This Evening

A social and supper will be given at the headquarters of the Socialist party, 811 E street northwest, from 6 to 8 o'clock tonight.
"The Minimum Wage" will be the subject of an address by Miss Z. S. Falk, secretary of the Consumers' League, at the Socialist meeting to be held at headquarters tomorrow night.

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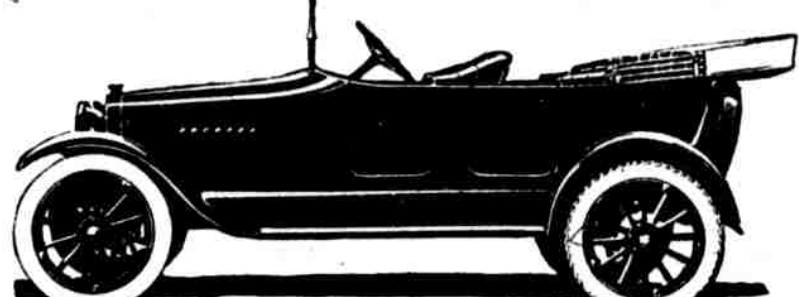
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